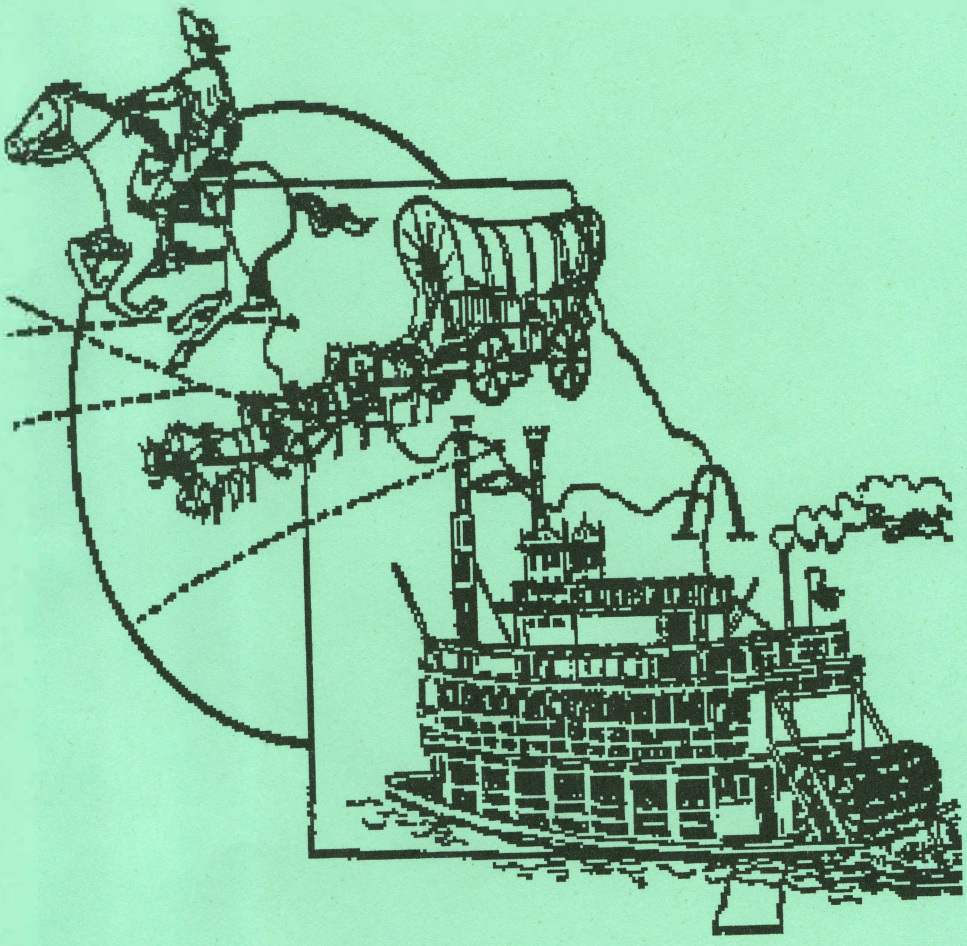

Toward The Setting Sun

2nd Series, Vol. 6, No. 1 Fall 2007

TOWARD THE SETTING SUN

The Historical Journal of the Missouri Conference

The United Methodist Church

Second Series

Volume 6, No. 1 Fall, 2007

This issue of *Toward The Setting Sun*, you will have noticed, is longer than usual. That's because the article by Dr. Ralph Lee Woodward, Jr., is so significant that we decided to print it in its entirety. Dr. Ralph L. Woodward was President of Central Methodist University in the days when the school was simply Central College. That is also the time when your editor was a student at the school. As is often the case with college students who do not know better, Dr. Woodward was unpopular with many of us. However, looking back, one can see that he was a wise leader at a time when Christian higher education was not an easy field in which to be. It is indeed an honor that his son chose our pages to present this short life of Dr. Woodward – and that he will present Dr. Woodward's papers to the Archives at Central Methodist University.

If you have an article you'd like to suggest for the journal, please don't be intimidated by the length of this one. You don't have to write this much. Just tell your story in however many pages it takes. For example, churches around the area are beginning to celebrate their 200th birthdays. That's significant, considering that Methodists have been in Missouri just over 200 years. It is to be hoped that most of those churches will have some kind of history as a part of their celebration. We would love to have those histories as a part of our journal in future issues. Please share them with me at

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Or, you can email them to me (if they are not super-long) at jogooch@aol.com.

We'd love to have other articles of historical interest as well. Does anyone out there know very much about the history of Loutre Camp Ground in Montgomery County, for example? What about the early days of Kingdom House? I've just been over the Santa Fe Trail Auto Route, and visited the spot where Jedidiah Smith, the great mountain man, was killed. Smith was supposedly a Methodist local preacher, as well. Anyone have a yearning to research that?

Drop me an email and we'll talk about any other project you have in mind. In the meantime, enjoy the life of Dr. Woodward.

John O. Gooch, Editor

Ralph L. Woodward: Missouri Methodist Leader

By Ralph Lee Woodward, Jr.

In July 1996 a prominent figure in Missouri Methodism, Ralph Lee Woodward, died in retirement near Orlando, Florida, attended by his two daughters, Margaret and Nancy. I, his only son, was in Costa Rica at that moment. My sisters took responsibility for arranging his affairs and looking after our mother, whose health was also failing by that time. Shortly thereafter, Margaret sent me his personal papers, suggesting that I, as a professional historian, was the appropriate depository for the family archive. These letters, records, legal documents, and other papers, although not extensive in volume, documented the highlights of his life from his childhood until his death. I found the papers helpful in writing a brief eulogy that I gave at the memorial service for him in Fayette, and at the time decided that they would serve as a principal source for a more extended biographical article later, after which I would turn the papers over to the Missouri United Methodist Archives at Central Methodist University. Although I retired from teaching in 2003, I had only begun to work through these papers when Hurricane Katrina violently interrupted this work on August 29, 2005. My wife and I evacuated our home in Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi, leaving the papers in my library study on the second floor, which we believed would be well above the expected flooding. As with so many others, of course, we underestimated the fury of this massive storm, which knocked the first story out from under the second, leaving everything on the second story inundated with mud and brine. A significant part of these papers had been in file folders on top of my desk, which apparently floated up to the ceiling, allowing only partial damage to the papers on top of the desk. Although some of them were seriously wet and scattered and some were lost altogether, I salvaged what I could, dried them with a hair dryer, and then scanned them onto two compact discs, thus preserving most of them in legible form and providing the

basis for this memoir of his life and work.[1] I am well aware of the pitfalls in writing biographies of loved ones and while I have made every effort at objectivity here, I know that it may not be free of personal biases and indelible impressions from my youth. Yet I believe strongly that his was a life that should be documented and preserved in the history of Missouri Methodism. This article is, then, to some degree a personal memoir of my recollections of my father, although the principal documentation for it comes from his personal archive.

FAMILY & YOUTH

Ralph Lee Woodward (1906-96) lived through nearly the entire twentieth century. His English ancestors were among the first settlers of Virginia. His great-grandfather, Lancelot Woodward (1797-1894), came from Virginia to Kentucky with his parents in 1800 and in 1840 moved on to Platte County, Missouri, where he built a fine farm. I think my dad possessed some of the same restless energy and pioneering spirit of old Lance. During the Great Awakening of the eighteenth Century, the Woodwards had become staunch Baptists. Ralph described his grandfather, Henry Clay Woodward (1847-1932), as a "hard-shell, very austere Baptist." Ralph's father, Robert Lee Woodward (1869-1949), perhaps in reaction to such evangelical zeal, was less overtly religious, however, and it was Ralph's mother, Lula Maud Stafford (1871-1958), a devout Methodist whose ancestors had come to Virginia in the eighteenth century and also migrated westward to Missouri, who had more influence on my father's choice of an ecclesiastical career. She continued to be a powerful influence on him until her death in 1958.

Born in Kansas City, Kansas, on August 31, 1906, Ralph was the third of six children.

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[1]The papers and a set of the CDs of the Ralph L. Woodward Collection will be deposited in the Missouri United Methodist Archives at Central Methodist University in Fayette and are hereinafter

His two older siblings, Claude (1894-1978) and Aileen (1896-1965), were considerably older and left the household while he was still very young. Thus, he was much closer to the triplets born on March 17, 1909 – Milton (1909-77), Mildred (1909-2004), and Margaret (1909-97). Ralph's formal education began at Lowell Public School in that city, later moving to the Irving Public School where he graduated from junior high school in 1921.[2] Many years later he told his grandson, Matthew, that he was especially influenced by a Sunday School teacher, Lyda Burton Conley (1874-1946).[3] Conley had already achieved notoriety as a female lawyer who defended American Indian causes, especially in her courageous defense of the Huron Place Cemetery, where Wyandotte Indians were buried, including her mother, in downtown Kansas City, Kansas. Along with her sisters, she carried the case to the Supreme Court of the United States, where she lost, but nevertheless succeeded in preserving the cemetery against those who wanted commercial development of the land. Conley was not only a role model for Native American women attorneys who followed in her footsteps, but she also was a powerful influence over the children in her Methodist Church Sunday School class.[4]

Ralph joined the Seventh Street Methodist Episcopal Church South in Kansas City, Kansas, at about age nine, and at an early age began to think about a career in service to God.

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cited at RLWColl. Document numbers refer to the numbers assigned on the CDs.

[2] Diploma of Ralph L. Woodward upon graduation from Kansas City, Kansas, Junior High School, May 25, 1921, RLWColl., Doc. 62.

[3]Matthew M. Woodward, "Grandparents," unpublished paper written at O. Perry Walker High School, New Orleans, LA, c. 1979, RLWColl., Doc. 25, p. 1. based heavily on a tape recording provided him by Ralph Lee Woodward.

[4]Clara Shin, "Lyda Burton Conley: In Defense of Huron Place Cemetery," unpublished paper submitted to Professor Barbara Babcock for her course in Woman's Legal History, Stanford University Law School, Fall 1996 , p. 34; and by the same author "Lydia (Eliza Burton) Conley," <http://www.stanford.edu/group/WLHP/papers/ConleyTimeline.html>, accessed 4 June 2007; see also "Her Tribe Vigil Over," *Kansas City Star*, May 18, 1946; Nellie McGuinn, "KCKS Public School System, 1819-1961," <http://www.kckps.org/disthistory/dist-history/mcguinn/mcguinn_1819-1856.htm>, accessed December 28, 2005. For a history and description of Huron Cemetery, see

It was not always a clear path. From the third grade forward he held part-time jobs – first delivering the *Saturday Evening Post*, then a newspaper route, later as the school janitor's assistant, and still later as a dairy worker and milkman . He spent several summers working on his grandfather's farm near Dearborne, Missouri. He was active in the Boy Scouts, where the troop leader was his brother-in-law, Joe Blackwell.[5] Blackwell was a Methodist hellfire and brimstone preacher in a rural parish near St. Joseph. Ralph acquired an addiction to long hours and hard work at an early age. In his sophomore year in high school he took a printing course that led to a part-time typesetting job. Soon thereafter, over his parents' objections, he dropped out of school altogether to work as a printer's apprentice in a newspaper office. Later he wrote that he had given up "taking up some kind of Christian work as my life work" in favor of "newspaper work and printing." For the next three years he worked in a Kansas City newspaper office and printing plant. He bought his own small printing press for seventy-five dollars and in his spare time did printing for businessmen near his home. He also had, as he put it, "the opportunity to work on the outside in the newspaper game and liked that part of it too."[6]

Yet he did not abandon Christian service. He taught Sunday School and led a Boy Scout troop. "There was always something pulling at me to go back and take up a life's work of Christian character," he wrote later. "It was after a long fight against it that I finally

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<http://www.kckps.org/disthistory/publications/mcguinn-kcks/mcguinn_huron.htm>.

[5]Matthew Woodward, "Grandparents," p. 1. Many years later, Ralph Woodward would return to the Seventh Street Methodist Church to preach the sermon at the 120th anniversary of the Church's founding and 75th anniversary of the building, June 16, 1963, Program of the Seventh Street Church, Kansas City, Kansas, for June 16, 1963, RLWColl., Doc.110; clippings related to 7th Street Methodist Church, upon 75th anniversary of the church building, RLWColl., Doc. 249.

[6] Ralph Lee Woodward, "My Autobiography," unpublished typescript written c. 1927, in RLWColl., Doc. 11.

decided to be a minister."[7] He was not yet 18 years old when the Kansas City District Conference licensed him to preach in April, 1924.[8] "I lost several friends that I had come to think a great deal of when I made this move," he wrote three years later, "but since that time I have made so many more that are finer and purer, that I feel and know that I've gained instead of losing."[9]

Encouraged to return to school if he was to be a full-time preacher, that fall he entered Scarritt-Morrisville, a Methodist school in the Ozarks, where he said, "I learned more in one year than I dreamed was ever possible."[10] In addition to his studies and a custodial job at the school, he founded and edited a remarkably literate and progressive weekly, *The Morrisville News*, that

served both town and campus. These activities supported him financially and provided him valuable experience.[11]

The following Spring, however, the Board of Education of the Methodist Episcopal Church South decided to close several small Methodist schools throughout the state, including Scarritt-Morrisville. These closings were part of Bishop William McMurry's plan to consolidate all Methodist schools in the state into a single, stronger Central College at Fayette. Years later, Ralph recalled the resentment at Scarritt-Morrisville over the closing:

> When the word came that our school was to be closed, even though it was a pitifully small school and ill-financed, it is surprising how strong the reaction was, . . . Unofficially, but with some encouragement, a group of us were half-way appointed to

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[7] "My Autobiography," p. 4.

[8] His license was renewed by the Kansas City District, Southwest Missouri Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church South in Kansas City, on April 15, 1925. RLWColl., Doc. 109.

[9] "My Autobiography," p. 4.

[10] "My Autobiography," p. 5.

[11] "My Autobiography, pp. 4-5; Matthew Woodward, p. 2.

> rotten egg the Bishop when he came to Bolivar to make an address. Just before we were to leave the word came that the Bishop had cancelled his address and someone had been sent in his place. I've always been thankful I didn't go because I've come to be very fond of Bishop McMurry, both as a student and later as one of his preachers in his Conference.[12]

Ralph moved to nearby Walnut Grove to complete high school. He supported himself by preaching every Sunday at the Methodist churches in the villages of Hickory Grove and Pearl and working at the Walnut Grove newspaper, where he set the type and printed the paper. He lived at the newspaper owner's home. He also played on the high school football team. By the end of the school year, he reported, "I was nearly worn out from trying to do so many things."[13]

College and University Education

During the following summer Ralph held two revival meetings, worked on a farm, and visited a great many people before entering Central College in the fall of 1926. Deeply in debt from his previous two years, he quickly found employment at the Fayette *Democrat Leader* and *Fayette Advertiser*, working there two or three nights per week, as well as at other odd jobs around Fayette. He had also been given a charge as a circuit rider, ministering to Methodist churches around Paris, Missouri. He bought an old model-T Ford to travel back on forth on the muddy roads in the sixty miles between Fayette and Paris, often taking much of the night to return home. All this work left little time for his studies and his grades suffered accordingly.[14]

At one point, he wrote later, "I felt like giving up and going back into the newspaper work." Instead, he quit school and moved to Paris, where he gave full attention to his clerical

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[12]Transcript of Interview by Cordell Tindall with Ralph L. Woodward, Fayette, April 26, 1981, RLWColl.

[13] "My Autobiography," p. 5; see also Matthew Woodward, p. 2.

duties. "In less than three months after I went over there," he wrote, "I was beginning to feel more like my old self. I was healthier than I had been for nearly a year."[15] With a return of his characteristic optimism, he held three revival meetings that summer and took charge of the Prairie Hill Circuit near Salisbury. He returned to Central in the fall of 1927, still a freshman. The College had enjoyed unprecedented growth. Under the presidencies of Rev. Paul H. Linn (1913-24) and Bishop W. F. McMurray (1924-30), enrollment had grown from 244 in 1920-21 to 743 by the fall of 1928. During the same period the faculty had expanded from 15 to 43, and the number of campus buildings had more than doubled.[16] After his disastrous start the year before, Woodward now became a top student.

His preaching experience made him a natural for the debating and oratory club and by his junior year he had won several honors there. At the Missouri Collegiate Oratorical Association, meeting in Fayette on March 7, 1930, his speech won him second place.[17] Entitled "The Moving Finger" and subsequently published in the *St. Louis Christian Advocate*, this speech took its cue from the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*[18] and is an eloquent plea for consolidation of small, rural, Protestant churches into larger, community churches. Reflecting an ecumenical spirit that would stay with him throughout his life, Woodward argued that

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[14] "My Autobiography," pp. 5-6; Matthew Woodward, p. 2.

[15] "My autobiography," p. 6.

[16] *Central College: A Christian Institution with a Worthy Record* ([Fayette]: n.d. [c.1929]) in RLWColl., Doc. 34.

[17] "Fifty-fifth Annual Contest of the Missouri Collegiate Oratorical Association," Central College, March 7, 1930. Copy in RLWColl., Doc. 58; "Oratory," *The Bulletin of Central College* 25:1 (May 1930), pp. 5-6.

[18] "The moving finger writes; and having writ,
Moves on; nor all your piety nor wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all your tears wash out a word of it."

fewer, but stronger, rural churches would serve whole communities, rather than dividing them. Aware of the limitations of circuit rider preachers with limited education and training, he advocated that "old preachers of the past generation should be liberally pensioned for their grand service to the cause," and "new student preachers should be urged to procrastinate their entry into the ministry until they get more brains. The pulpit should be manned by the best minds of the country. Itinerancy should be put in the show case with the covered wagon and the buggy. . . .This is no time for denominational rivalry, competition and sentimental loyalty," he declared. Instead, Christianity must "keep pace with modern life." Thus, the "church of the small, nineteenth century community must go. In its place a twentieth-century church, with twentieth-century aspirations, must be created."[19]

Meanwhile, on August 14, 1928, he married a classmate from Paris, Lucy Marr Yowell (1904-32). Together, they built a stronger Methodist Church at Paris and endeared themselves to the local community. Founded in 1832, the Paris Methodist Church had for most of its history been on a circuit, but in recent years Central College had been providing full-time pastors. It had about 200 parishioners during Woodward's tenure there. Professor William R. Baskett reported that "in recent years a number of progressive young ministers imbued with modern ideas . . . have built up that church in membership and in spirit. Four of these young men have been graduates of Central College – Frank C. Tucker, W. B. Selah, R. S. Keaton and the present incumbent, Ralph L. Woodward." Three of this progressive group, including Woodward, went on to seminary at Yale.[20] Woodward had been ordained as a Deacon in the Missouri Conference in 1930, the first man to be ordained by Rev. A. Frank

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1859 translation of Edward J. Fitzgerald.

[19]Ralph L. Woodward, "The Moving Finger," *St. Louis Christian Advocate* (May 14, 1930), pp. 3, 7.

[20] William R. Baskett, "Member of Church in Paris [Mo.] Traces a Century of Its History,"

Smith following his election as Bishop. In 1932 Bishop William McMurry ordained Ralph as an Elder in the Missouri Conference .[21]

Woodward earned a reputation for powerful sermons at Paris. These sermons often had strong historical content, not only from Biblical sources, but also from American history. They reflected an awareness following the onset of the Great Depression of the need for social and economic reform in this country. Well grounded in modern history, his sermons often carried unabashed political as well as religious messages.[22] He formed close relationships in Paris, especially with the town physician, Dr. Marvin C. McMurry, whom he later eulogized at McMurry's funeral in 1950, as a model for the "perfect working relationship of the minister and doctor."[23] Lucy was a solid partner in the development of his sermons and had herself published at least one religious article in the *Homiletic Review* (August 1930). But she also maintained a strong sense of humor that sometimes served to keep Ralph's ego in check, as was reported anecdotally in the *Monroe County Appeal* (Paris, Mo.) on March 24, 1932:

Rev. Ralph Woodward tells how a mouse humbled his pride some months ago. He had accepted an invitation to address a meeting at Moberly. Several days before the meeting his picture was published in the *Monitor-Index*, along with some complimentary mention. Carrying the paper home he pointed with pride to the picture and remarked to Mrs. Woodward: 'Now you can see what a big man you married.' She replied that something would have to be done to get him back to earth. Just as he took the platform and began to dispense wisdom a mouse began running in and out where everybody could see it. The speech was a

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The Central College Bulletin (April 8, 1932).

[21]"Information Concerning Ralph Lee Woodward," submitted to Central College Board of Curators in 1949," RLWColl., Doc. 42, p. 16.

[22]See for example his notes for Thanksgiving sermons, RLWColl., Doc. 125.

[23]"Remarks of President Ralph L. Woodward of Central College, Fayette, Missouri at the

flop.[24]

Tragedy struck, however, when Lucy died from complications of an appendectomy on July 14, 1932. This bitter blow, along with the deepening national economic depression, undoubtedly contributed to Ralph's own faltering health. He had been hospitalized for a month following his graduation from Central in 1931, and in September 1932 he returned for two more months to Barnes Hospital in St. Louis. This difficult time, however, had a silver lining, for it was there where he met a nurse, Beulah Mae Suter (1908-99), who would care for him for the next 64 years. Beulah was the daughter of Oscar Valentine Suter (1861-1930), a Methodist minister in Illinois. She adapted quickly to the role of minister's mate. Ralph entered Yale Divinity School the following January and a year later (January 2, 1934) they were married at Marquand Chapel on the Divinity School campus in New Haven, Connecticut. The first of their three children was born the following December.

Yale opened a new world of scholarship and ideas to Ralph. Detailed study of psychology and theology, as well as the more practical aspects of the ministry, broadened his understanding of the world around him and sharpened his analytical skills. A piece he published in September 1933 reflected his talent as a preacher and discussion leader. Intended as a topic for a young people's conference, he emphasized the importance of focusing one's life with lofty purpose, frequently citing biblical and other historical figures as examples of how success depended on such focus.[25]

The Yale Divinity faculty influenced him profoundly. The papers he wrote reveal a strong sense of urgency for democratic reform and progress within the Christian churches as

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Funeral Services of Dr. Marvin C. McMurry," Paris, Mo., July 19, 1950, RLWColl., Doc. 127.

[24]"About People You Know," *Monroe County Appeal* (Paris, Mo, March 24, 1932), p. 1.

[25]"The Power of Purpose," *The Pilgrim Highroad: A Magazine for Young People* 1, no. 12 (September 1933): 45, 52-53.

well as his concern for social justice and action. He took a particular interest in young people and encouraged student activism and participation in both religious and political organizations.[26] He strongly supported Franklin Roosevelt's "New Deal," and even expressed admiration for Norman Thomas and the Socialist Party. Very much aware of the larger social issues facing the country, he endorsed an activist role for the clergy in "An Open Letter to the *Christian Advocate*." There he argued that Christians must take action "concerning the fundamental problems causing class consciousness" and that the "ministry should speak clearly and fearlessly about those situations involving social injustice and discrimination." He lashed out against special interest groups: "Today it must be realized that sin is as much a collective as an individual evil." He saw no problem with ministers joining picket lines with strikers and argued that "the Christian ideal of the kingdom of God should not be preached from the pulpit as some vague hope for the far-distant future, but should be presented with practical possibilities of putting the principles of Christian living into actual practice. Action for justice and right human relations should not be forsaken in order to maintain contented and sleepy congregations. Furthermore, who, if not the minister, is going to lead the way for social justice in most of our communities?" He questioned whether it has "ever been 'respectable' to attempt to live the Christian religion in a world where Christians are in the minority" and pointed out that even Jesus of Nazareth "was not recognized as respectable by the dominant privileged groups." He thus supported the use of church buildings for meetings of groups that had been denied the freedom of speech and assembly elsewhere because of political, economic, and social views. "Truth and justice must both be given vocal and active expression in Christian groups if we are seriously interested in building men. Those on the

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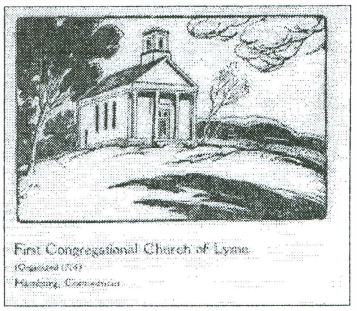
[26]See for example his paper on "The Program of the Church with Students," written for Professor Clarence Shedd, Winter Term 1935-36. RLWColl., Doc. 55.

lower levels of existence are not the only ones needing re-creating experiences of life"[27]

While pursuing his seminary studies at Yale, he also became the popular pastor (1933-36) of the Congregational Church at Lyme, Connecticut, where he lived in the parsonage of this picturesque, old New England community. He was an active minister to the parish, not merely a student preacher. A statistical summary of his first year at the Lyme church reported that he preached 143 sermons during the year (48 at Lyme, 43 at Grassy Hill, 43 children's, and 9 others outside the parish). He carried on a busy schedule of parish meetings, committees, and programs, including fifteen days of physical labor on church equipment. He noted 143 pastoral visits, 29 personal conferences, plus 35 group conferences and meetings within the parish, plus seven more outside the parish. Membership in the church during his first year grew modestly from 91 to 97, with an average attendance at Sunday services of 69. He participated actively in various meetings of church members, especially of young people. Some of his suggested topics for the Men's Forums held during the year reflect his contemporary focus and progressive political attitude at that time:[28]



The Cooperative Movement and Credit Unions
The Peace Movement
Technology
Capitalism and its Culture
Stock Exchange
Louisiana
California
German fascism
Italy
Ethiopia

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[27] *Christian Advocate* (April 12, 1935): 463.

[28] "A Statistical Summary of the Work of the First Congregational Church of Lyme from September 1, 1934 - August 31, 1935," in RLWColl., Doc. 188.

His annual report for his final year at Lyme reflected continued growth and an active stewardship of the church. He carried out an active schedule of meetings, funerals, marriages, and other church duties. The church was refurbished and renovated, all on an annual budget of under $2,000, his own annual salary accounting for $900 of that in 1937-38.[29] Forty years later, as this church celebrated its 250th anniversary, it invited Woodward back to participate in the festivities.[30] Leaving behind his own Methodist roots, Woodward studied the history and growth of Congregationalism with enthusiasm. His strong ecumenical spirit rebelled against what he considered an excessive denominationalism of Protestantism that undermined its fundamental Christian goals and philosophy.[31]

By the time he had completed his B.D. degree at Yale in 1936, Woodward had established himself as a dynamic preacher and pastor in Connecticut and a progressive force in that state. In recommending him for the position of Congregational Pastor-at-Large in Oklahoma, Rev. Porter Bowen, Associate in Religious Education of the Missionary Society of Connecticut lavished praise on his service at Lyme. "When he first went to Lyme the church was in very poor condition. He has given it new life and power with his leadership all the while continuing his studies at Yale." He was notably effective in organizing the young people of the parish, Bowen noted, and had been highly effective in helping to establish "a new summer conference for older young people."[32]

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[29] First Congregational Church of Lyme, Summary of the work of the Church, Fiscal year 1937-38. RLWColl., Doc. 9.

[30] John A. Thursby to Ralph L. Woodward, Lyme, Connecticut, August 2, 1976; Thursby to Woodward, Lyme, Connecticut, September 24, 1976. RLWColl., Doc. 8.

[31]See his "Notes and other papers relating to the history and present circumstances of Congregationalism in America," RLWColl., Doc. 212.

[32] Porter Bowen to L. J. Marsh, Hartford, CT, February 18, 1936, RLWColl., Doc. 7.

OKLAHOMA

The New England experience opened a new world to this mid-westerner as he became strongly committed to social democracy and Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. He also become committed to Congregationalism and accepted an assignment as its Pastor-at-Large for the South Central United States. Although there were only thirteen Congregational Churches in this vast frontier of New England Puritanism comprising Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, and Louisiana, it was a major challenge for the young preacher. The Superintendent in Oklahoma City was apprehensive about appointing a former Methodist to this post, but Woodward came with strong recommendations. One pointed out that "he has held down a church of the old New England type in the midst of an artist community that calls for ability and some polish."[33] Dean Luther A. Weigle of the Divinity School assured Oklahoma that they would "make no mistake" with Mr. Woodward. Weigle went on to explain Woodward's transfer from Methodism to Congregationalism:

> We do all that we can here to discourage students from changing their Church affiliation. . . . We receive students from twenty-five to thirty different denominations each year. It is our hope to serve all the Churches by sending back to them well trained men. Now and then we have a case, however, where a man, having begun to serve a Congregational church in this vicinity, becomes clear that that is the fellowship in which he wishes his ministry to be place[d]. This is what has happened in the case of Mr. Woodward. His decision to abide in the Congregational fellowship long antedates any presentation of his name to you. I would have no hesitation whatever about employing him and he seems to me to be unusually well qualified for the work that you have in mind."[34]

Others echoed this sentiment, but Methodist Bishop John Moore, was less sanguine. He advised Woodward that when he himself had been at Yale in 1895, he, too, had been tempted to enter the Congregational ministry, but had not regretted his decision not to do so. He

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[33]Malcolm Dana to Lucian J. Marsh, New York, February 18, 1936, in RLWColl., Doc. 132.

[34]Luther A. Weigle to L. J. Marsh, February 28, 1936, in RLWColl., Doc. 133. See also letters of recommendation from David McKeith, Paul Vieth, and Ernest Halliday, RLWColl., Docs. 130, 131,

added, however, that "many Methodists enter that ministry. If they did not the Congregational Church would be in a bad way."[35] It was clear that Woodward's selection for the post was in large part based on his experience less in New England than in Missouri, and his knowledge of the "southern point of view." [36]

The work in Oklahoma was rewarding, but involved a lot of travel over a wide area, as he covered a huge area with only a few Congregational churches. Woodward often preached or supervised conferences at the far-flung Congregational churches of the South Central region. Typical of his work was his "The Power of Today," sermon to kick off a week-long series on "The Preaching Mission" that he delivered at the Congregational Church at Friona, Texas, on Sunday, January 10, 1937.[37] He also edited a monthly newsletter for the district.[38] Mrs. Woodward gave birth to their second child, Margaret, in Oklahoma City in December, 1938.

YALE

Success in Oklahoma City led to his promotion to Superintendent in 1938, but in 1939 Yale called him back as Director of Religious Field Work and Assistant Professor at the

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and 134.

[35]Eulogy by Ralph Lee Woodward, Jr., at Memorial Service for Ralph Lee Woodward, Linn Memorial Methodist Church, Fayette, Missouri, August 17, 1996. The letter from Bishop Moore to my father was unfortunately among those papers destroyed by Hurricane Katrina.

[36]Ernest M. Halliday to Lucian J. Marsh, New York, February 27, 1936, in RLWColl., Doc. 131.

[37]*The Friona Star* (Friona, Parmer County, Texas), January 8, 1937, in RLWColl., Doc. 115; "Ralph Woodward," *The Missionary Herald at Home and Abroad* 135 (6) (June 1939), in RLWColl., Doc. 135.

[38]"Information Concerning Ralph Lee Woodward," submitted to Central College Board of Curators in 1949," RLWColl., Doc. 42, p. 17.

Divinity School.[39] His considerable experience in rural and small town churches made him ideally suited to pioneer instruction in the practical realities of the town and country parish. On a more practical note, the increase in salary he received at Yale allowed Ralph to finally complete payment of his student loans that he had taken out at Central in 1927-29.[40] Soon after the birth of his third child, Nancy, in August 1941, he began to make concrete provisions for the higher education of his own children.[41]

Succeeding Professor Paul J. Vieth, who moved up to the Horace Bushnell Chair of Christian Nurture at Yale,[42] as Director of Religious Field Work Woodward supervised the placement of Yale Divinity School students in a broad range of summer and year-long jobs involving pastorates and other religious activities. Almost every student was engaged in some form of remunerative or voluntary work and this was important experience for their training for the Christian ministry. He also took some students to the Summer Sylvandale School for Ministers in Estes Park, Colorado, where he was a faculty member.[43]

Woodward was also busy with activities beyond the university during the early 1940s. He was a member of the Business Committee of the Church Extension Division of the Board of Home Missions of the Congregational and Christian Churches, a member of the staff of the Interseminary Commission for Training for the Rural Ministry, Chairman of the Conference

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[39]Carl Lohmann to Ralph Woodward, New Haven, CT, April 15, 1939, RLWColl., Doc. 104.

[40]F. E. Burcham to Ralph L. Woodward, Fayette, December 9, 1939, RLWColl., Doc. 49.

[41]Notes on provision for education of his children by Ralph L. Woodward, March 1, 1942. in RLWColl., Doc. 73.

[42]Sophia R. G. Steibel, "Paul Vieth," *Christian Educators* <http://www.talbot.edu/ce20/educators/view.cfm?n=paul_vieth>, accessed May 28, 2006.

[43]Ralph H. [*sic*] Woodward, "Religious Field Work," *Yale Divinity News* 37(1) (November 1940): 4; Marvin T. Judy to Ralph L. Woodward, Dallas, n.d. [c.1982], in RLWColl., Doc. 67. For a more detailed description of his work as Director of Religious Field Work at Yale see "Field Work and

on Field Work in Theological Educatgion, a member of the Town and Country Committee of the Home Missions Council of North America, a member of the Board of Directors of the City Missionary Association of New Haven, and the New Haven YMCA, where he was especially active.[44] These were the dark years of World War II, of course, yet the unity which that terrible struggle stimulated among the American people was reflected in Woodward's life. Exempted from the draft, he served as a replacement minister at the Congregational Church in Berlin, Connecticut, preaching each Sunday and performing other pastoral chores. Chaplain training was a major part of his work at Yale through 1945, and at home he developed an impressive victory garden. Indeed, he led his children to believe that this was a major reason the Allies won that war! While his teaching and scholarly publications at Yale were impressive, he was also an active board member of church-related organizations in Connecticut and the nation. After the war, he continued to preach at various churches throughout Connecticut on an occasional basis and served on the Congregational Church's Board of Missions and other national and local civic committees including the Boards of Directors of the local public library in Mount Carmel, Connecticut, the New Haven City Missionary Association, and the Connecticut Council of Churches.[45]

In 1942 Woodward became Assistant Dean of the Divinity School, working closely with its distinguished Dean, Luther Weigle (1880-1976), while continuing to teach and direct religious field work.[46] In late 1947 he was promoted to Professor of Pastoral Care, effective

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Ministerial Training," *Yale Divinity News* 38(4) (May 1942): 3-4, in RLWColl., Docs. 101 and 102.

[44]Ralph L. Woodward to Marie Woods, New Haven, March 23, 1942, in RLWColl., Doc. 161.

[45]"Information Concerning Ralph Lee Woodward," submitted to Central College Board of Curators in 1949," RLWColl., Doc. 42, pp. 16-17.

[46]On Weigle's long and distinguished career see "Dean Weigle at 90: A Lifetime of Making God the 'Ultimate Concern," *New Haven Register* (February 14, 1971), RLWColl., Doc. 65. See also Weigle's *The Glory Days: From the Life of Luther Allen Weigle* (New York: Friendship Press, 1976).

July 1, 1948, while continuing as Director of Religious Field Work and Assistant Dean of the Divinity School.[47]

The training of ministers for small towns and rural districts had become his specialty at Yale and his course on the Town and Country Church received wide acclaim. Addressing the Connecticut alumni of the Divinity School in February 1948, Woodward described that course and its place in the training of Christian ministers. He argued that "content" and "practical" subjects were complementary and necessary parts of seminary training that would become more evident as young ministers matured on the job. "The man trained only in one or the other is seldom able to transmit the Christian message with conviction to others," he said. "The ivory tower philosophy of training is a thing of the past. We are concerned with the whole training and of the candidate for the ministry that he might be a workman with knowledge and understanding of the Christian gospel and ability to impart the knowledge to others in the building of a Christian fellowship." With a deep sense of the process by which the Christian religion contributed to contemporary life, Woodward detailed the multipile functions of a minister and elaborated on specific tasks, the most important of which was the "inspiring, recruiting, and training of leaders." He listed a wide range of practical areas that seminaries needed to provide training for, including clinical training in order that the minister could better provide better care and counsel for the emotionally restless and mentally disturbed, training in survey and analysis of communities in order that a strategy for church work might be reached, instruction in parliamentary procedure for more effective administration of public and group meetings, among others, to which he added the need for more training in radio, television, and religious journalism. "The range of responsibilities that

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[47]Resolution of the President and Fellows of Yale University, New Haven, December 13, 1947., RLWColl., Doc. 84.

must be undertaken by the parish minister has grown out of all proportion to the responsibilities laid upon men in other professions," he continued, but "the problem of practical training of men for the Christian ministry also involves taking into account the increased demands of the local church. . . . The average church has come to think of the minister as a professional leader, not necessarily committed to staying in the same community for his entire ministry, nor primarily identifying his life and destiny with the rise and fall of the community itself. The short tenure of our ministry in any given place is the primary cause of this attitude. This sense of regarding the minister as a professional leader has led to the expectancy that he will do a great many things the laity themselves once did in the operation of the church." He called this a tendency to regard the parish minister as an "executive secretary." Personally, Woodward confessed, "I am very unhappy about this development in our church life and feel that the ministry is more to be blamed than the church. Practical training of the ministry requires that we give far more attention to preparing a man to recruit and train and put to work the laity of the local church." He concluded the address with these words: "Practical training of men for the Christian ministry means enabling a man when he leaves seminary to be prepared to make the influence of the Church of Christ felt in the lives of people, in the community, the state, the nation, and the world."[48]

Woodward called on the clergy to be active in community development. "The town and country minister," he wrote, "in addition to the normal pastoral functions as preacher, educator, counselor, pastor, church administrator, and leader of the church, also has a role as a leader in the community." Reflecting his own experience, he added that "in the small town and country community this responsibility cannot be avoided by the minister. It is simply thrust

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[48]Ralph L. Woodward, "The Practical Training of the Christian Minister," *Yale Divinity News* 43 (March 1948): 1-4 (reprinted in *The Minister's Quarterly* 4(2) (May 1948): 3-8, RLWColl., Docs. 92

upon him by the nature of his work and the setting in which he carried on his ministry. The acceptance of this role and the use of it vary widely depending upon the minister's understanding of the community and his interpretation of the Christian religion as a transforming power in community life." Supporting a more activist role by Christian clergymen beyond the bounds of the church parish, he declared that "religion will cease to be a divisive force in community life when its ministry can conceive of its task in relation to all the people of the whole community." He believed the rural minister had a responsibility to "help secure a unified community." Thus the town and country minister "has the task of recruiting, educating, inspiring, and stimulating the volunteer and group leadership. The town and country minister is frequently asked to assume positions of group leadership. If he accepts such a community role, he may find that he is taking an unwarranted amount of time from the work of his parish and at the same time preventing the development of adequate voluntary leadership. The role of the minister as a community leader will be fulfilled best when his time and strength are given to the discovery, enlisting, and training of people to become leaders of groups." Further, he argued, "the minister attempting to lead a program of change must be able to create a dissatisfaction with the present situation and to stimulate a desire for something better. Any program of action will fail if these two steps are not achieved." Yet, he cautioned, "dissatisfaction and the desire for something better must come without the minister becoming marked as too radical or too conservative." While thus encouraging ministers to become politically active, he had a strongly pragmatic approach to problem-solving and public progress. "Unless the minister knows the facts he can not hope to inspire others to work and assume responsibility for securing something better." He stressed, then, the minister's obligation to concern himself with not only the religious and moral

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conditions and opportunity for spiritual growth, but also the community's educational and cultural resources for both young and old; the civic and political consciousness and adequacy of community services; the economic condition of the people, especially provision of adequate employment opportunities, credit facilities, land use and tenure policies, and transportation and communications facilities; recreational and entertainment resources for all ages, classes, and races; social and fellowship opportunities; health and medical facilities; and interpretation to the community of wider state, national, and international issues and analysis of their impact on both the local and broader situations. With this broad vision of the responsibilities and functions of ministers as community leaders, he felt that "no other leader of the community has the opportunity afforded the town and country minister for inspiring, securing, and training leaders who will share in bringing the community m nearly into the type of society and fellowship that can be called Christian."[49]

Woodward had kept closely in touch with Central College and in 1942 it invited him to deliver the baccalaureate sermon, at which time Central conferred an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree on him.[50] This was one of two honorary doctorates he received in that year, the other, a Doctor of Humanities, coming from Piedmont College in Demorest, Georgia.[51]

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[49]"A Ministry to the Entire Community," *Social Action* 14(3) (March 15, 1948), pp. 23-33, in RLWColl., Doc. 180.

[50]Correspondence between Robert H. Ruff (and his Secretary, Marie Woods) and Ralph L. Woodward, December, 1941 - March, 1942, in RLWColl., Doc. 161; Robert H. Ruff to Ralph L. Woodward, Fayette, March 10, 1942, and Woodward to Ruff, New Haven, March 13, 1942, in RLWColl., Doc. 43. The citation for the D.D. degree is found in Doc. 68 and the programs for the 1942 Baccalaureate and Commencement ceremonies in Doc. 262. He also kept in touch with Dean Puckett . See, for example, the letter from E. P. Puckett to Ralph Woodward, Fayette, MO, May 3, 1939, RLWColl., Doc. 106, in which Dean Puckett acknowledges Woodward's contact and support of the College and promises to "keep you in touch with what goes on in Central College."

[51]Presentation of Ralph L. Woodward for the honorary degree of Doctor of Humanities at Piedmont College, June 1, 1942, in RLWColl., Doc. 72; Program of 45th Commencement of Piedmont College, Demorest, GA, June 1, 1942, in RLWColl., Doc. 74.

Piedmont was a small college originally founded in 1897 by a Methodist preacher, but early in the twentieth century it had come under the supervision of the Congregational Churches. It appointed Woodward to its Board of Trustees in 1942. Later, Yale University conferred a third honorary degree on Woodward, a Master of Arts, upon his promotion to full professor at Yale in 1948.[52] Letters from his colleagues at Yale attest to the esteem in which they held him. As early as 1943 James English had called him "a man of rare spiritual insight, good everyday, practical common sense and the capacity for helpful friendship."[53] The *Yale Divinity News* referred to his "unique contribution to theological education," and Hal Lucock called him "the brightest spot in my life for a dozen years around the school."[54] George Dahl noted his "unfailing tact, boundless patience, and consecrated wisdom."[55] And Yale's renowned historian of Christianity, Kenneth Scott Latourette, told his class, "He is the finest Christian I have ever known."[56]

PRESIDENT OF CENTRAL METHODIST

Woodward's continued association with Central College eventually culminated in his appointment as President of the College in 1950. On September 8, 1949, Cyrus E. Burford, Chairman of Central's Board of Curators, wrote the following to Woodward:

> We at Central College have as yet not secured a President to fill our vacancy and

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[52]Carl A. Lohmann to Ralph L. Woodward, New Haven, June 25, 1948. RLWColl., Doc. 85. The citation for this honorary degree read, in part, "For many years the University has followed the pleasant custom of conferring the honorary Yale degree of Master of Arts privatim upon a person appointed to the rank of professor in the University who has not already received its Master's or Doctor's degree."

[53]James F. English to H. H. Chapman, n.p., March 29, 1943, RLWColl., Doc. 98.

[54]Hal Luccock to Ralph L. Woodward, Boothbay Harbor, ME, September 4, 1950, RLWColl., Doc. 91.

[55]George Dahl to Ralph L. Woodward, New haven, April 14, 1950, RLWColl., Doc. 75.

[56]Anonymous note regarding Dr. Latourette's in-class statement, RLWColl., Doc. 105.

> your name has again been suggested by several parties as one who would be an outstanding leader in religious education for Central College and Missouri. Since your address at Central several advances have been made in our situation here. All of our indebtedness has been cleared and we have more than a million dollars in productive endowment; in fact it produced over $40,000 for us last year.
>
> We have a large gift by will which should come to us in the next few years from a former Lead magnate and this we will receive at the death of his widow who is now quite old. This will probably amount to $275,000 to $300,000. Our enrollment for the year, winter and summer sessions, is over 900 and is all that we can care for with our present facilities. We have raised all of our faculty salaries the last two years and the school has been progressing quietly but steadily under the leadership of Acting President, Dr. E. P. Puckett.
>
> I am very anxious to learn if you would be in any way interested in the Presidency of Central and would be happy to hear from you in the very near future.[57]

Woodward answered promptly, expressing his honor at being considered for the post. "In the last few years I have refused to consider three such inquiries from other institution for two reasons," he stated. "The type of work I am doing at Yale represented a pioneering effort in one phase of theological education and needed to be stabilized before I could honestly consider any change of work. This has now been accomplished and is rapidly becoming a part of the curriculum in other divinity schools. The second reason was that the other institutions apparently interpreted the position of president as primarily one of securing finances for current expenses rather than a long range opportunity for developing an adequate administrative, financial and educational program." He acknowledged a great indebtedness to Central for "the opportunity it gave me to secure a college education" and he declared that he was "inclined to do almost anything that I can to make similar opportunities available to other young men and women. There is a very important place for the church related college in the future of our country, but its struggle will probably be very difficult during the next decade." He was sure, however, "that the contribution made by good church related schools is so great that churchmen everywhere must be made aware of their importance in th welfare of our

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[57]Cyrus E. Burford to Ralph L. Woodward, St. Louis, September 9, 1949. RLWColl., Doc. 42,

people and our nation. Therefore, after much thought about your inquiry, I am very happy to tell you that if the Curators of Central College care to pursue the matter I will give it serious consideration." He went on to request very specific data regarding the college's enrollments, student characteristics, faculty, administration, finances, endowment, and the Board's operating procedures in the administration of the College, as well as a statement of the "main problems the college must face and solve in the next few years?"[58]

Dean Puckett quickly supplied the requested information. Puckett made no secret of his support of Woodward's candidacy and urged him to visit the campus as soon as possible. "I hope that it will be possible for you and the committee of the Board to reach a favorable decision," he confided. "I believe you would enjoy the work here and would be able to render a very fine life service to the cause of Methodist education in this state."[59] Woodward responded positively, but expressed some alarm at an endowment of only slightly more than a million dollars, when it had been more than 1.3 million in 1930. He had some other questions from the data Puckett had sent, but overall found "that the reading of the material you sent me has heightened my interest in the

possibility of coming back to Central and Missouri Methodism."[60] Puckett later attributed the decline in the endowment to the "business conditions in the '30s," when much of the college's funds had been invested in real estate loans, some of which were never repaid resulting in the college taking over "a good deal of Kansas City real-estate. Later, most of this real-estate was

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p. 1.

[58]Ralph L. Woodward to Cyrus E. Burford, New Haven, September 17, 1949, RLWColl., Doc. 42, pp. 2-3.

[59]E. P. Puckett to Ralph L. Woodward, Fayette, September 29, 2949, RLWColl., Doc. 42, pp. 6-7.

[60]Ralph L. Woodward to E. P. Puckett, New Haven, October 8, 1949, RLWColl., Doc. 42, pp. 9-10,

sold, and in the process the endowment took quite a jolt."[61]

Puckett, of course, enjoyed great prestige at Central. He had joined its faculty in 1908 and had been a strong leader throughout good years and bad at the College. His gracious and dynamic personality and popularity may have presented something of a challenge for Woodward during his first years as Central's president. Some inkling of this is seen in a letter from Bishop Ivan Lee Holt to Woodward in March 1950. He wrote, "I had a letter the other day from one of our influential preachers, in which he was asking if the new President is to be a stooge for Dean Puckett. I told him that you had deep appreciation of Dean Puckett, but that you would stand on your own feet." Woodward responded that the Bishop's statement was "a genuine reflection of my own feeling about the matter."[62] In fact, the two were on very cordial terms and Puckett was especially helpful to Woodward in assisting him with his move to Fayette and with many other details in the transition. Puckett stayed on as Dean of the College following Woodward's accession to the presidency until 1952 and returned briefly in 1953 to replace temporarily the ailing Dean Everett C. Buckner. While there were occasions where President Woodward felt that Pucket perhaps took matters into his own hands that might have better been discussed with the President, in general they continued to be close colleagues and friends. Puckett died on April 6, 1959.[63]

Following a visit to the campus and an interview, the Board formally elected Woodward President of the College on November 21, 1949.[64] Bishop Ivan Lee Holt

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[61]Puckett to Woodward, Fayette, October 19, 1949,RLWColl., Doc. 42, p. 14.

[62]Holt to Woodward, St. Louis, February 22, 1950; Woodward to Holt, New Haven, March 1, 1950; RLWColl., Doc. 42, pp. 65-66.

[63]See correspondence between Woodward and Puckett, January-June, 1950, in RLWColl., Doc. 160, 22pp.

[64]Burford to Woodward, St. Louis, November 19, 1949, RLWColl., Doc. 42, p. 27.

enthusiastically supported his election.[65] Woodward had considered Central's offer carefully. Aside from personal considerations around his tenured full professorship at Yale and relative financial security there, he also analyzed the problems he would face as chief executive officer of Central. Could the college compete successfully for new students in the face of the increasing number of new junior colleges, which also implied the necessity of recruiting sophomores and juniors? A decrease in GI Bill Veterans had already begun by this time. How could Central maintain a respectable selectivity for its four-year course? New methods of recruiting students much concerned him. Adequate salaries to maintain strong faculty in all ranks also concerned him, as he stressed the need for improved benefit packages including retirement and health insurance. He foresaw the need for substantial increases in gifts and endowments to avoid total dependence on tuition. He believed there was a need for considerable building and plant maintenance, which would demand a larger endowment.[66] But he quickly accepted the offer and promptly began arrangements to move to Fayette.

Even before moving his family to Fayette, however, he attended the 1950 Commencement. He spoke to the alumni banquet on June 2 and preached the baccalaureate sermon on June 4, in a sense his first official acts as the new president.[67] He told the alumni that after more than a decade of observation of college men coming from various colleges, he had a growing conviction that church-related liberal arts colleges offered the best kind of education in a time when there was rising emphasis on state-provided education. He emphasized the future role of Central in Missouri, the nation, and the world. "I love Central

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[65]Burford to Woodward, November 23, 1949, RLWColl., Doc. 42, pp. 31-32.

[66]Notes of Ralph L. Woodward indicating problems he saw in accepting presidency of Central College, 1949. RLWColl., Doc. 273.

[67]Woodward to Burford, November 26, 1949; Frank Tucker to Ralph L. Woodward, n.d., University City, Mo., RLWColl., Doc. 42, pp. 34-35, 72.

College," he declared, "what it did for me – if I can help it do for others." In outlining an ambitious plan for Central's future, he emphasized the faculty. "The faculty IS the college." he told the alumni, promising to develop the "strongest possible faculty, with both able scholarship and the ability to teach, while maintaining the Central tradition of a good faculty-student ratio and close personal relationship" and "consecrated to the social and religious heritage that is ours." He also looked toward expanding the student body to approximately a thousand and achieving a degree of academic selectivity. He called for improvement of equipment and facilities, including expansion of dormitories, a new auditorium, and a little theater that would help to bring the community and college closer together through development of the arts. He acknowledged that too large a percentage of the college's expenses were dependent on student fees and tuition as he dedicated himself to building the endowment and seeking larger contribution from the Missouri Methodist churches and the alumni. "Missouri Methodism owns Central College," he said, as he called for strengthening the college's relations with both church and alumni. He concluded his spirited address with a quote from the *New York Times Magazine* regarding the recent search for a new President of Yale University:

> Wilmarth Lewis, an impious man of letters on the Yale Corporation – a graduate governing body otherwise awash with bishops, barristers and tycoons – was talking, not long ago, about the qualities they were at that time still looking for in a man to succeed Charles Seymour, who retires this year, as president of the university:
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> 'He must be a leader–not too far to the right, not too far to the left, and of course not too much in the middle.
>
> 'He must be a magnificent speaker and a great writer.
>
> 'He must be a man of iron health and stamina, a young man–but also mature and full of wisdom.
>
> 'He must be married to a paragon–a combination of Queen Victoria, Florence Nightingale, and the best-dressed woman of the year.
>
> 'He must be a man of the world and yet he must also have great spiritual qualities–a great administrator who can delegate authority.
>
> 'He must be a Yale man and a great scholar–also a social philosopher who has at his finger tips a solution of all world problems, from birth control to Formosa.
>
> 'As I have been talking,' Mr. Lewis concluded, 'I don't doubt you have realized that

there is only One who has most of these qualifications. But – Is God a Yale man?'[68] Yale's influence on Woodward was undeniable. At baccalaureate he preached "The Test of Graduation," a dynamic sermon that reflected on the temptations that faced a president elect. He talked especially about the role of religion and the church in education and in government, challenging the graduates to apply their Christian faith in a normal and natural expression in their future lives. In the present world, he declared, the Christian college graduate finds many appealing paths to apply teachings of Christ.[69]

Fayette's welcome to the Woodwards was enthusiastically reflecting a mid-western hospitality that still characterizes the town and which Woodward had missed in New England. Woodward's selection as president accompanied a successful championship season for the Eagle basketball team which had cast a euphoria over the campus in the Spring of 1950.[70]

Woodward's twenty years at Central, during which it officially became Central Methodist College, was the apogee of his career. The future of the College in 1950 was in doubt in both academic and financial terms. The College had come under especially difficult times during the Presidency of Rev. Harry S. DeVore (1942-47) and needed substantial rebuilding. There were also bitter and divisive quarrels among faculty and administrators. Years later Marilyn Gaddis credited Ralph Woodward with greatly improving the campus environment. Speaking of her father, Merril Gaddis, a distinguished professor of history at Central from 1929 to 1958, she wrote to me in 2002, "Quite simply, your father added years to

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[68]Notes of Ralph Woodward's address to the Central College Alumni, June 2, 1950, RLWColl., Doc. 111.

[69]Notes of Ralph L. Woodward's Baccalaureate sermon, "The Test of Graduation," Central College, Fayette, June 4, 1950, RLWColl., Doc. 276.

[70]See, for example, Lester Shell to Ralph L. Woodward, Fayette, February 19, 1950, and F. A.

my father's life. . . . The environment was such that my father felt he could not be a spectator of good will. Morally, he took a side of which he only partly approved–and only part of the time. He could be himself only with my mother and me. If you can recall him as being at his peak, when his collapse would come in May 1956, that is because your father provided him a safe environment."[71]

I will not detail here his many accomplishments during those exciting two decades of expansion and growth of the college, for they are well known and have been set down admirably by Frank Tucker and Bartlett Jones in their histories of Central.[72] His return to Fayette was not only a return to his alma mater, but also a return to Methodism and to the mid-west, which I think he missed during the decade at Yale. His background and experience suited him admirably for the job and the Board of Curators had been unanimous in his selection.

In the fall of 1950 he addressed the assembled faculty for the first time, lecturing them on the historic role of the church in American secondary and higher education. He did not play down the financial and other difficulties that faced Central in the 1950s, but he emphasized the importance of a liberal arts education in an age of increased technical specialization. He promised to get more support from Methodist churches in Missouri and to emphasize building the Living Endowment of the College. Optimistically, he promised expansion and a bright future.[73] In fact, he moved promptly in concert with the Board of

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Culmer to Ralph L. Woodward, Fayette, March 2, 1950, RLWColl., Docs. 27 and 28.

[71] Marilyn Gaddis to Ralph Lee Woodward Jr., 2 July 2002, RLWColl., Doc. 1.

[72]Frank C. Tucker, *Central Methodist College: One Hundred and Ten Years* (Fayette: Central Methodist College, 1965); Bartlett C. Jones, ed., *Central Methodist College, 1961-1986* (Fayette: Central Methodist College, 1986).

[73]Notes for Ralph L. Woodward's address to faculty and staff, Central College, October 2, 1950, RLWColl., Doc. 117.

Curators, to improve faculty benefits and salaries, including substantial improvement in the College's retirement plan, adopted by the Board on November 9, 1950.[74]

His first year as President of Central launched an exciting period of growth and experimentation. He spent considerable time traveling, seeking funds for the College and preaching inspiring sermons in Methodist churches throughout the state, both aimed at building the College's financial resources. Early in his presidency, he pressed the Board of Curators to address a long list of needs of the College, including among others, new buildings and other physical plant improvements, library, athletics, the Swinney Conservatory, faculty selection and faculty and staff salaries, organization of the Board and its committees, alumni representation on the Board, investment strategy of the Endowment, College financing, college-town relations, and recruiting of students.[75]

Formal inauguration of the new president did not occur until June 2, 1951. This gala event included greetings from Missouri Governor Forrest Smith, University of Missouri President Frederick Middlebush, and other dignitaries from church and state educational establishments. The inaugural ceremony was part of a three day commencement program, June 2-4, 1951, that included an alumni weekend as well. In his welcoming remarks, Dean Puckett noted "that the man we are honoring today, the man on whose shoulders we are placing the administrative burdens of the institution, just twenty years ago sat as a member of the senior class on the occasion of the inauguration of a president of Central College [Robert Ruff]. Now, I do not want to put into the mind of any overly ambitious senior any difficult-to-realize objective; but here is a man who sat up, took notice, worked at the job, deserved the

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[74]Amendments to the Central College Retirement Plan adopted by the Board of Curators, November 9, 1950, RLWColl., Doc. 257.

[75]"Questions," n.d., RLWColl., Doc. 242.

position, and has it." In a remarkably accurate prophesy, Puckett added, "I imagine that about twenty years from now he will be ready to pass the burden on to a younger man." Board Chairman C. E. Burford commented, "One year is a short time in a life as long as mine, but in that period I have come to know a new friend, a man who meets my ideal as one of vast experience in his privileged positions of minister, educator, and executive. Keen of intellect, a student of character, quick to sense a situation, ability to judge the evidence and to calmly make a just decision and to provide the means of solution. A Christian gentleman! He will be greatly aided in his work by his charming wife and lovely children."[76]

In a brief inaugural address, Woodward cautioned that it was a time when there were "cries of danger and crisis for the church-related college." Yet "here at Central College, a president and a faculty have no fear of facing troublous times alone; for behind this institution, its personnel, and its officers, supporting and encouraging them at every turn, are almost a quarter of a million Methodist people of Missouri, from approximately one thousand churches led by more than six hundred fifty pastors." In a period of rising secularization of higher education, he dedicated Central to a strong religious core, as he promised that he would seek to secure and maintain "a qualified and able faculty that is avowedly and professedly Christian in character and work;" that it would "provide and supervise a social, recreational, and community life for its students in keeping with the moral, social, and religious ideals of the Christian world community;" further that it would "seek to provide a special type of pre-professional training and guidance for youth dedicated to the service of the Christian church and all Christendom, in terms of their special needs, for the many areas of the Christian ministry," and "above all, because of special and significant aspects of the church-related

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[76] *Inauguration of Ralph Lee Woodward, A.B., A.M., B.D., L.H.D., DD., President, The Bulletin of Central College,* New Series Vol. 21, No. 1 (October 1951). RLWColl., Doc. 107.

college, it will continue to provide instruction in religion – historically, socially, and as an individual faith–to all its students as a part of the natural, normal offering of an educational institution concerned with furnishing its students an adequate and full education for the whole man in a whole society."[77]

He appealed for greater support of the College from Missouri Methodists when he declared that the church-related college "must help break the shackles that are binding and denying many tax-supported educational institution the freedom to teach the *whole* truth that man is basically religious. It must teach a knowledge of the history and development of human kind in the light of that religious faith, as well as their social and political heritages, and in terms of individual adjustment, an understanding of the part that religion plays in the development of the whole man in a community life." To this he added, " The greatness of our task is sobering; the opportunity awaiting us is challenging; and through the years, I shall make every endeavor to see that Central College will continue to work for the change in the pattern of civilization, making it worthy of the trust and confidence of the Methodist people who desire a good educational institution under the auspices of a Christian faculty in a Christian community."[78]

Two days later, Yale Divinity Dean Luther Weigle gave Central's Commencement address, commenting that "We at Yale know Dr. Woodward well, and are sorry to lose him, even though it be for your good." Before launching into a powerful commencement address on the importance of preserving freedom in the world, he reviewed Woodward's service at Yale, especially his direction of religious field work and noted that "he accepted what is generally regarded as one of the most exacting and difficult posts on the faculty – being responsible for

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[77] *Ibid.*

the placement and supervision of the field activities of three hundred and fifty students in training for the Christian ministry. He insisted from the start that these field services must be more than a means of support for students; they must be so organized and carried out as to contribute both to the education of the students and to the welfare of the churches and other institutions they serve. His success was such as to result in a permanent enrichment of the curriculum of the Divinity School by the inclusion of a field work requirement which he devised."[79]

The following fall Woodward addressed the assembled students at chapel soon after classes began, opening with what was to become a familiar greeting to them: "Men and women of Central . . ." He told them that the weekly required chapel service was an important part of their education, for religion was part of the "wholeness of life" without which no life was complete.[80] He also encouraged a stronger faculty-staff organization that would meet regularly, although it must be said that faculty governance remained relatively weak at Central.[81]

Well into his third year at Central, Woodward gave a detailed report on his administration to the Board of Curators, in which he shared "frankly and confidentially the problems and crises before the college," challenging that body to give meaningful and significant assistance in policy making. Enrollment had dropped to less than six hundred, overwhelmingly limited to Missourians, although 18 states and two foreign countries

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[78]*Ibid.*

[79]*Ibid.*

[80]Notes for Ralph Woodward's chapel address, Central College, Fayette, September 18, 1951, RLWColl., Doc. 112.

[81]Constitution of the Faculty of Central College, as amended September 28, 1951, RLWColl., Doc. 253.

(Guatemala and the Philippines) were represented. He noted the demographic decline of "depression babies" that was accounting for declining enrollments by 1952, but also pointed to the competitive admission policies and scholarships being offered by state colleges and universities. He argued persuasively for making a greater appeal to Methodist students. He wanted recruiting agents in the field full time to intensify church recruiting throughout the state, but also in major large population centers such as Chicago and New York, as well as in Kansas City and St. Louis. He proposed adjusting scholarships to meet the competition, emphasizing that they had to plan now for the future. In a detailed analysis of th financial situation of the college he could report some growth in the endowment and in support from the Methodist churches, but the expenses and needs were very great and he projected a probable deficit for the year, despite his efforts to keep it small. Another problem was significant loss of faculty, approximately twenty percent during the past year, brought on especially by retirements, including long-time stalwarts Puckett, William F. Baskett, and Louise Wright. Several younger faculty members had returned to graduate school to continue their study, while six more had left for positions at other institutions. He believed that the replacements that had been found were good people, but he also noted a "restlessness" in middle-range faculty, and frustration over low salaries. He also noted local labor shortages for staff positions because of low salaries. Nor was he altogether happy with the general level of student life on the campus, suggesting that the balance between study and social life needed improvement. He thought that unrest among the boys was especially serious and that perhaps fraternities played too large a role on the campus, with a need for an increase in cultural interest organizations. Girls were perhaps too focused on marriage, and he especially noted the prolonged and heavy petting that went on openly, notably on the front porch of Howard-Payne dormitory. He also found problems in dress and manners, although the 'fifties turned

out to be only a pale prelude to the 'sixties on that score. Drinking problems, however, seemed to be "in decline." Along with several other pressing problems, his report in some ways offered a bleak picture, but he expressed great optimism for the future as he briefly outlined a ten-year plan to strengthen the financial basis of the college and to develop its student body into a larger and better group.[82]

His advocacy of a closer connection with the Methodist Church and especially with Bishop Ivan Lee Holt, paid dividends in greater Methodist support for the college. In the summer of 1951 he was a delegate to the Eighth Ecumenical Methodist Conference in Oxford, England, and in 1952 he was a delegate to the General Conference of the Methodist Church in San Francisco. He became a member of the Methodist Council in 1955, and was a delegate to the Ninth World Methodist Conference in 1956 as well as a delegate to the General Conference of the Methodist Church. In the fall of 1960 Dr. and Mrs. Woodward participated in a five-week seminar tour of Europe that examined college and university administration and higher education in Europe.[83] He continued to travel over the state and maintained his reputation as one of the great preachers in Missouri Methodist history. The reaction of a former classmate was typical of the response he got: "Just a note to tell you how very much I enjoyed hearing you last Sunday at Woodlandville," wrote Harriet Mitchell Campbell. "It was a real treat to hear such a good sermon, and find an old schoolmate again."[84]

Woodward's efforts to increase enrollment slowly paid off. After dropping to a low of 554 in 1954, enrollment rose steadily thereafter to 780 by 1960 and more than a thousand by

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[82]Notes of report of Ralph Woodward to Board of Curators on State of the College, Fayette, 1952, RLWColl., Doc. 31.

[83]Biographical sketch of Ralph L. Woodward, c. 1960, RLWColl., Doc. 16; Itinerary for the European Study Seminar, Board of Education of the Methodist Church, Sara Marquis Travel Service, September 22, 1960, RLWColl., Doc. 270.

1965.[85] A revised salary scale brought faculty salaries up significantly, although still well below AAUP averages for each rank. A revised retirement plan in 1950 brought Central faculty under Social Security and improved the college's private retirement insurance plan as well.[86]

In response to the pressing financial needs of the college President Woodward took a hard line against athletic expenditures, prompting considerable criticism from some quarters as Central's intercollegiate athletic competition suffered from Woodward's tough decision to de-emphasize. That criticism would endure for a long time – even after his retirement in 1970, but it was an essential part of restoring financial solvency and maintaining academic quality.[87] In contrast, Central's music program, including its marching band and concert orchestra, continued to win high praise throughout the state.

There were other areas where difficult decisions and sometimes conflictive matters arose. Notably, his administration coincided with the racial integration movement and made Central a leader in this area. Decisions to admit more African-American students and work toward equal rights for blacks were not universally welcomed in Fayette, which had a strong Southern tradition. There was an especially embarrassing incident in 1957 when a Fayette restaurant denied service to the President of Philander-Smith College while he was a guest of the Missouri Methodist Annual Conference.[88] There were other town-and-gown difficulties,

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[84]Harriet Mitchell Campbell to Ralph L. Woodward," n.p., n.d., RLWColl., Doc. 274.

[85]"Distribution of Students by Classes, 1942-43 through 1964-65," RLWColl., Doc. 163.

[86]Revised Scale, Faculty Salaries and Rank, March 1952, RLWColl., Doc. 256; Average Faculty Salary Analysis for Period 1951-52–1960-61; RLWColl., Doc. 164; and Central Methodist College Faculty Salary Study–Twenty Years, RLWColl., Doc. 223.

[87]Jones, *Central Methodist*, pp. 150-63, has a good rundown on Woodward's athletic policies.

[88]See the note from Ted Mallinckrodt, Chairman of the Board of Christian Social Relations, in

as certain Fayette merchants felt that the College provided some services that competed unfairly with their businesses. There were also disputes regarding the amounts charged by the city for water and electricity.[89]

In 1955, Dr. Samuel L. Meyer succeeded the ailing Everett Buckner as Dean of the College. Meyer had graduated from Central in 1930 and had gone on to a successful academic career as a botanist at the University of Tennessee and Florida State University. Although Woodward had considered Meyer a friend from college days, there was friction between them until Meyer left in 1958 to become academic vice-president at the University of the Pacific. There he attracted several of Central's faculty and administrators to that institution, creating some ill will at Central.[90] In 1965 Meyer became President of another Methodist college, Ohio Northern University, where he remained until his retirement in 1978.

Beginning with construction of a new dormitory named for Bishop Holt, which also included new and modern dining facilities for both men and women, Woodward took major steps toward modernizing and upgrading Central's campus. The three Methodist Conferences had voted almost unanimously to underwrite Holt Hall.[91] As it neared completion, in 1956, the college published a commemorative booklet highlighting Woodward's achievements

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which he commended "Central College and Linn Memorial Church for welcoming Christians of all races to use their facilities and to share their services," but also requested the agencies, boards and commissions of the Annual Conference to plan future meetings where all the services needed will be available for all the delegates and guests of The Conference." RLWColl., Doc. 209.

[89]See for example the suggested "Open Letter to the People of Fayette" from the Board of Curators, in 1959, regarding water and electric rates and threatening that the college would begin to produce its own electric power. RLWColl., Doc. 229.

[90]See the remarkable letter from Fred Bergsten to Ralph L. Woodward, Chautauqua, N.Y., June 29, 1959, regarding Meyer's recruiting of Central faculty for the University of the Pacific, RLWColl., Doc. 248.

[91]"Fall Convocation and Cornerstone Ceremonies for Ivan Lee Holt Hall, September 25, 1956," RLWColl., Doc. 252.

during the first six years as president. The unnamed author of the booklet concluded that "from the pastorate and the classroom he has brought to the Central campus a dedication that has made a real contribution to education. In conferences and conversations he has interested countless students in the challenges of the Christian ministry. As a leader and intimate friend he has been an inspiration to students and faculty alike, and his influence has been marked and widespread."[92] The booklet concluded with a poem dedicated to Dr. Woodward by a student of the class of 1956, Patricia Vought:

> "Across the softened green of shaded walks,
> Tower chimes denote the passing days;
> And we who have been friends together here
> Prepare to go our various ways.
>
> "Each within his separate heart has kept
> Beyond the edges of forgetting, memories
> Of campus walks in snow-time . . .
> Of April lilacs, and October trees.
>
> "But more than these, we hold within our lives
> A broader concept of our world and age . . .
> The challenge of a future to explore
> Through experience and in printed page.
>
> "We who study, dream, and worship here,
> And go to live as fully as we can,
> Know that back of every fulfilled dream
> Is the guidance of some God-directed man.
>
> "Therefore, we have wished to honor you . . .
> Leader of men; builder of minds of youth . . .
> We are grateful for your consecrated purpose
> And for your dedication to the Truth.
>
> "God lead you through long years of service,
> Our President; in all His times
> Filling you with joy and peace as holy

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[92] *Dr. Ralph L. Woodward, Central College, Fayette, Missouri* (Fayette: Central College, 1956), RLWColl., Doc. 211.

As the ringing of the Central College chimes."[93]

In his 1960 review of the College's development for the Board of Curators, Dr. Woodward reported that since 1953 there had been a "gradual and controlled growth" in Central's enrollments with limitations on entering class and tighter restrictions on admissions producing a higher quality student body that now exceeded 800. Because of retirement of so many faculty who had been there since the early years of the century, there had been considerable faculty turnover. About 75% of the faculty had been there less than ten years. Building this a new faculty he claimed had been his single most important responsibility in the 1950s, as he argued that he had built the "best faculty in the history of college." He also noted the expansion of sources of income for the College, in gifts as well as student fees, which hadn't been raised much, while Methodist Church support greatly increased. "Never in the history of the college have so many people shared in making revenues for the college." He cited especially growth in gifts from industry, alumni, and the church, giving the Board of Curators credit for following a course that opened new doors of opportunity that allowed increases in student aid and major capital improvements. The endowment had grown from $1,080,000 in 1950 to $1,840,000 by 1960, growth that continued in the '60s to 2.5 million by 1962-63. Central ranked a respectable 35th among 129 Methodist-related schools and colleges in the United States by 1962 in size of its endowment. By 1963 it had moved up to 13th among the76 Methodist-related colleges in the U.S.[94] By May of 1965 the endowment had reached $3,151,784. There had also been substantive reorganization to improve almost every

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[93]Patricia Vought, "To Dr. Woodward," *Ibid.*

[94]*Endowment Growth in Methodist Educational Institutions, 1962-1963* and *Statistical Summary for Educational Institutions Related to the Methodist Church, 1963-64* (Nashville: Division of Higher Education, Board of Education, the Methodist Church, 1963-1964), RLWColl., Doc. 176.

aspect of the College's administration.[95]

In 1961 he furthered his effort to woo more Methodist support when he convinced the Board to change the school's name to Central Methodist College, a move that was not universally supported, yet which furthered closer ties to Missouri's Methodist churches.[96] The following January, at the annual "Founders Day" celebration, now renamed "CMC Day," President Woodward told the students and faculty that the new name of the college reflected the important role of the church in higher education in America and Missouri.[97] Woodward's emphasis on a close relationship between education and religion was not solely to gain influence and more financial support from the Methodist Church. He was from beginning to end a "preacher," and his frequent addresses at chapel, to freshman convocations, at commencement, as well as to the alumni and the Board of Curators, never failed to carry that theme.[98] "Christian idealism must be incorporated into a college education," he told the students assembled for Chapel on May 15, 1956.[99]

Woodward's building expansion plans for the college took another major step forward in 1963 when a member of the Board, Samuel Lee Stedman (formerly Samuel Silverman) gave the College a million dollars for the construction of a new science building. He had made the

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[95]Detailed notes of report by Ralph L. Woodward to the Board of Curators on "The College in the 'Fifties," 1960, RLWColl., Doc. 214.

[96]"Decree for Charter, Central Methodist College, Circuit Court of the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit of Missouri for Howard County," July 17, 1961, and "Charter of Central Methodist College as Amended May 27, 1961," RLWColl., Doc. 264.

[97]Notes for Ralph L. Woodward,'s CMC Day address, Fayette, January 28, 1962, RLWColl., Doc. 120.

[98]Although most of his sermons and lecture notes were destroyed by Hurricane Katrina, enough of his notes remain to make this statement categorically. See, for example, his personal notebook, which contained notes for many of his addresses, RLWColl., Doc. 6. See also his notes for an Upper Class Assembly address, February 22, 1952, RLWColl., Doc. 121.

[99]*Dr. Ralph L. Woodward, Central College, Fayette, Missouri* (Fayette: Central College, 1956),

gift anonymously, but following his death his widow and the Board agreed to making the gift known and changing the name of the building from Curators Hall of Science to the Stedman Hall of Science. "No one ever gave us a million dollars before," Woodward remarked with a smile. Even before this bequest, Stedman had been a major donor to the college.[100] Other building projects resulted in the addition of two more dormitories, Burford Hall in 1960, named for the long-term Chairman of the Board of Curators, and Woodward Hall in 1964, named for President Woodward.

The 'sixties also brought the sexual revolution and student activism. While Central was relatively quiet compared to many campuses around the country, it nevertheless shared concern over student discipline and behavior, as students became politically active and socially rebellious, demanding among other things an end to compulsory chapel. President Woodward showed remarkable flexibility in the face of these currents, and his own liberal biases were not always contained, notwithstanding the conservative bias of many of the clergy and business-oriented donors with whom he remained friendly. Some of his own staff favored more draconian measures to deal with student disorder,[101] and the new Bishop, Rev. Eugene Frank, in 1963 made a strong appeal for tighter discipline on the campus when he questioned whether any individual who does not know and accept the purposes of the College should be a student in it.[102] As elsewhere, however, students were demanding a greater voice in the administration of the institution, as was reflected in a delegation from the senior class in May

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RLWColl., Doc. 211.

[100]*Kansas City Star*, March 21, 1963. See the program for the opening of the Stedman Hall of Science, September 1-6, 1963, RLWColl., Doc. 250.

[101]See, for example, Admission Director E. E. Rich's letter to President Woodward, Fayette, March 26, 1965, RLWColl., Doc. 237.

[102]Statement of Professor N. Christian Nielsen, Department of Chemistry, Central Methodist College, April 17, 1963, RLWColl., Doc. 263.

1964 when they requested an audience with the Board of Curators at its meeting on May 23, 1964, so that the Board might "be aware of student attitudes and feelings on campus; through this, it should be possible to govern and administer even more effectively the affairs of the college."[103] The following year the students circulated a questionnaire to alumni seeking advice for the board regarding faculty-student relations and the direction the College should take.[104] Behind Woodward's leadership, the Board was not insensitive to such requests and before long both faculty and students each had a regular representative at Board meetings.

Yet some supporters of the college felt that a stronger hand was needed with unruly students. A resolution on August 2, 1964, from the Marlborough Methodist Church noted its consistent support of Central Methodist College and its desire " to be able to continue such support in good conscience, knowing that every effort is being made to make Christian Education and discipline available to our youth." But it had come to their attention that "there is laxity in the administration of the affairs of said Central Methodist College, in that there have been acts of vandalism perpetrated on the property of said college, without adequate efforts having been made to ascertain and punish the culprits, and in that there have been acts of theft and damage to personal property of students without adequate efforts to ascertain and punish the guilty persons, these conditions obtaining to the detriment of said institution, and the disturbing of the peace and tranquility necessary for the pursuit of the objects usually sought in such institution." Therefore, the church's board resolved to protest to Bishop Frank, President Woodward, and the Board of Curators of the Central Methodist College, asking "that steps be taken to insure better discipline and control of the students who may be

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[103]Donald L. Armitage, Anetha Jo Combs, Mary Jo Davis, Linda Hightower, Howard D. Johnson, and Richard G. Wyatt to the Board of Curators, Central Methodist College, Fayette, May 18, 1964, RLWColl., Doc. 166.

[104]Rev. J. S. Kabler to Board of Curators of Central Methodist College, Caledonia, Mo., July 3,

disposed to cause trouble, and that copies of this resolution be sent to the various persons enumerated above, respectfully asking their cooperation in this matter, and that an improvement of the situation described above will be expected."[105]

Student disorder and complaints, along with the departure of some key faculty, by the mid-60s sustained certain rumors around the state relating to problems with the student body, the faculty, the administration, the academic quality of the institution, and even the integrity of the Board of Curators. Particularly troubling was the reported decline in the quality of the faculty. By 1965 barely 20 percent of the faculty held doctorates.[106] The decade of the 'sixties was a time of rapid expansion in American higher education when the demand for new faculty in most fields exceeded the supply of new PhDs. In response to these rumors the Board issued a report to the Methodist Conferences of Missouri on June 1, 1965, that insisted that the college was indeed thriving, with increased enrollments, substantial improvements in its physical plant, and increased quality and stability in its faculty, notwithstanding an alarmingly small percentage of the faculty having completed their doctorates. It especially endorsed the work of President Woodward, in the following terms.

> Dr. Ralph Woodward is beginning the sixteenth year as President – the longest tenure in the history of the College. In no other administration has the College enjoyed such progress as it has under the leadership of Dr. Woodward. The growth in enrollment, endowment, buildings, facilities and academic achievement indicates the strength of his administration. The Board of Curators commends Dr. Woodward for his competence, his labors and his able leadership. We pledge to him our confidence

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1965, RLWColl., Doc. 168.

[105]Resolution of the Official Board of the Marlborough Methodist Church, Kansas City, August 2, 1964, RLWColl., Doc. 167.

[106]See especially Elizabeth Berry to R. Carter Tucker, Kansas City, August 1, 1965, RLWColl.,

and support as we move toward the goal of excellence in all aspects of the college's life.[107]

A letter from a student who went on to a highly successful career in higher education reflected the nature of the tension between students and administrators of that era.

> I am writing this, belatedly, for two reasons. . . . First, Central was extremely well represented by the Band September 16 [1968] at the Cardinal football game. I was in attendance, wishing I could be out there again, glad to be able to claim alumniship at an institution willing to support and show off its superior fine arts program.
>
> Second, I think you would be interested to know that, in retrospect, I have become irrevocably convinced that the style of administration which you practiced during my four years at CMC is the only way to direct a college. I have attended, during the past two years, a university at which the President compromised the best interests of his institution when confronted with student demands. I have discovered that students do not know their own best interest; give them an inch and they'll take a college, particularly when student leadership is inferior and selfish (as it was at CMC during my stay there) or radical (as it was at MSU [Michigan State University] during my stay there).
>
> Why hire trained administrators if policy-making is turned over to students? Immaturity reigns; I've discovered that real maturity doesn't happen until one has been married for a while. Maturity accompanies genuine responsibility, and there's no place in the typical undergraduate education for an adolescent to find it. Consequently, it is imperative that the student be guided, and his rebellious instincts be constructively channeled. They'll hate it (and you), but most of them will, like I did, appreciate it (and you) later. of course, you can't tell a student that; you sure couldn't tell me anything. I'll never forget our conversation that last day or two of school, after you'd gotten me off the Independent Study Committee hook. I asked you why you were doing this for me and you replied that you had to overlook short-term disappointments for long-range considerations. I think I'll make CMC proud of me someday; someday I want to teach there. In the meantime, no one will ever hear me say bad word one about the college. Although I let it down frequently, it (and you) never let me down, and I'm discovering this more and more all the time.
>
> I guess what I'm really trying to say is: Your way of handling the college's affairs, external and internal, is right, and (I'll be presumptuous) don't let anybody tell you differently. I'm pleased to hear about the library, pool and music hall; as soon as we've recovered from our myriad financial crises we'll contribute as generously as possible.
>
> Again, belated congratulations on the band and thanks for other things.
>
> Sincerely

Doc. 45.

[107]"Report of the Board of Curators of Central Methodist College to the Missouri East and the Missouri West Annual Conferences," June 1, 1965, RLWColl., Doc. 165.

Terry B. Smith, '66[108]

During the late 'sixties the College continued to thrive under his leadership, but it was clear that Woodward was slowing down and losing some of the energy that he had always displayed. Serious health problems began to afflict him. He continued to receive high praise for his work as president as he raised the quality of the faculty in the late 'sixties. Rev. Frank Tucker, Chairman of the Board of Curators, published his history of the college in 1967 in which he praised the "superb leadership" of Woodward during his long tenure as president.[109] The Missouri Legislature also honored him with a resolution extolling his leadership and building of the endowment, guiding "Central Methodist College into a very healthy financial condition," noting the "many notable and enduring accomplishments of this outstanding pastor, professor and college president, to his church, college, state and nation," and congratulated him on his "outstanding contribution to the youth of our nation."[110] Near the end of his administration a new member of the college's Board of Curators, a Methodist minister from Sikeston, expressed his admiration of Woodward after sitting through his first meeting of the Board:

> I appreciated your strong leadership at the Curator's meeting that afternoon, Ralph, and even though it was my first time to watch you in that role, I can say that I wish every Methodist in Missouri could sit in on such a meeting. I was glad to be a member of the Board – but after attending that meeting, I am even more appreciative and aware of the enormous task you've had all these years. The greatest blow I had that day was your announcement that within a few years you would reach retirement! It seems I was at your installation as President only a very short time ago. The

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[108]Terry B. Smith to Ralph L. Woodward, East Landing, Michigan, 6 October 1968, RLWColl., Doc. 236. Smith went on to earn his Ph.D. in political science at Michigan State University and is presently Executive Vice President, Dean of Academic Affairs, and Professor of Political Science at Columbia College in Columbia, Missouri.

[109]Frank C. Tucker, *Central Methodist College: One Hundred and Ten Years* (Fayette: Central Methodist College, 1965), p. 142.

[110]Resolution of the Missouri 73rd House of Representatives," in *Central Methodist College Bulletin* (May 1966).

> College will get another President – but it will never be able to replace you and Methodism will always have a tremendous debt of gratitude to you for your leadership and guidance these past years. God has blest us all with your administration – and I feel he has blest me with your personal friendship.[111]

The continued pressure of financing the college and the difficulty of improving the quality of the faculty in the 1960s, when the market for academics exceeded the supply, took its toll on his health. After 1967 he began to look toward retirement and spent increasing amounts of time with his hobbies, although he still continued to travel around the state preaching at Methodist churches and other groups. He announced his intention to retire no later than June of 1971 at the 1969 Commencement, but accelerated that schedule and was succeeded by Dr. Harold P. Hamilton, formerly President of Kentucy Wesleyan College, in August 1970.[112] Woodward was still an inspiring speaker and constantly received praise for his preaching and his addresses to college assemblies. Typical was the comment of a banker named Schoonover following Woodward's address to the opening convocation in September 1968. "When I listened to Dr. Woodward I easily understood the reason for his being such an excellent college president."[113] The Alumni Association conferred a further honor conferred on both President and Mrs. Woodward in 1970 when it awarded them Distinguished Alumni Citations at the annual alumni banquet.[114]

By 1970, if many problems remained, the College was in sound financial condition. Woodward's twenty years as President of Central, the longest presidential tenure in the

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[111]Rev. Joseph H. Wagner to Ralph L. Woodward, Sikeston, Mo., November 13, 1968, RLWColl., Doc. 218.

[112]"Biographical Information, Dr. Ralph L. Woodward," c. 1971, RLWColl., Doc. 14.

[113]Herman H. Luetzow to Ralph L. Woodward, St. Louis, September 9, 1968, RLWColl., Doc. 205.

[114]Supreme Court Justice Lawrence Holman to Dr. & Mrs. Ralph L. Woodward, Jefferson City, March 9, 1970, RLWColl., Doc. 206.

College's history, was marked by extraordinary growth and maturity. The endowment had increased from slightly more than a million dollars to nearly 4.5 million. Three dormitories, the Stedman Hall of Science, and married student housing were added along with substantial renovation of the older buildings, including an expansion of the library and the addition of the Little Theater. Curriculum reform and improved academic procedures were also carried forth during his years including the enlargement of the faculty from about 40 in 1950 to more than 60 by 1970 to accommodate increased enrollments. The college especially excelled in music education, teacher education, and pre-medical studies, but was known best for its strong liberal arts focus. New innovations in curriculum had been added, including a three-week Interim Term in January when students could take a single course, many of which would be offered off campus and abroad. He reported to the Board that the student body by 1969 "is a somewhat puzzling combination of a high proportion of serious students mixed with a larger number of the hippie-type than before, reflecting a national trend which seems to be coming in larger numbers with each Freshman class. Many of the complaints are still the same, i.e., food, chapel and assembly, and beer. However, with the increase in student participation on self-study committees in an effort to bridge the gap between faculty, students and the administration, there has developed a faction within the students which resists this cooperation and considers the students who do cooperate to be 'yes men' to the administration and faculty."[115] A concerted effort had been made to improve faculty salaries and benefits, and although they were still not truly competitive, significant advancement had been made.[116]

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[115]Minutes of the Board of Curators of Central Methodist College, November 8, 1969, RLWColl., Docs. 143 & 272.

[116]See "Revised Scale Faculty Salaries and Rank as adopted November 8, 1969 to be in full effect by September 1970, RLWColl., Doc. 225. This scale put full professor salaries in the $9,500-$15,000 range, associate professors at $8,000-$11,000, assistant professors at $6,000-$9,500, instructors at $6,000-$7,500, and graduate assistants at $4,500-$6,000.

Average faculty salary and benefits had risen over his twenty-year presidency from $3,334 in 1949-50 to $9,442 in 1969-70.[117] During the same time, of course, tuition and fees had risen from only $400 per year to $1,075 by 1969-70, and the cost of room and board at the college from $390 to $775.[118] While faculty salaries remained lower than national averages and there was criticism that the quality of the faculty needed further improvement, his achievements were notable. He was the last clergyman to preside over Central (at least to the present day) and in some ways his paternalistic approach to the job reflected a sort of pastoral responsibility which he felt for the College as his parish.

I was here only for the first five years of his administration, but I know he worked tirelessly and selflessly for the College. He loved his family dearly, and gave us his attention whenever we asked. I often thought he was very wise, however, in allowing us so much freedom to make most decisions for ourselves. He bred strong self-reliance in us from an early age, which I have always valued. In 1955 he had the pleasure of awarding B.A. degrees to both my mother, who had gone back to classes after 1950 to complete her baccalaureate degree, and to me. By the time he retired in 1970 the three children had scattered across the country and had produced ten grandchildren of whom he was always very proud.

Retirement

"Retirement" did not end Woodward's active life. He continued to be a leader in community and church affairs, as a Mason, a Rotarian, and in the Fayette Round Table. He served as District 607 Governor of the Rotary in 1973-74.[119] He practiced his hobbies –

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[117]"Central Methodist College Faculty Salary Study – Twenty Years," RLWColl., Doc. 223.

[118]Central Methodist College, "Tuition, Fees, Room and Board Charges, 1950-1971," RLWColl., Doc. 284.

[119]Harry A. Steward to Ralph L. Woodward, Evanston, IL, 5 September 1972, RLWColl., Doc. 158.

gardening, woodworking, photography, and ham radio – with gusto and in ways that often helped others. By 1970 his health had been failing, but in retirement and he regained remarkably good health until almost the day he died. He was active in the Masonic Lodge until 1978, being associated with the Ararat Temple of Kansas City as well as the Fayette Lodge, where he was serving as Acting Chair of the Temple Committee of the Fayette Temple in 1972.[120] As an article in the *Columbia Tribune* put it, "With photography, gardening, and woodworking to fill his time, Woodward might have assumed he would be busy enough in his retirement years. But in the early 1960s he decided he had better plan for some other activity, so he became interested in amateur radio."[121] He was an active participant in the Army's Military Affiliate Radio System that handled messages for military personnel and would serve as a communications system in the event of a regional or national emergency. Even before his retirement he had received commendations from the Department of the Army for his work in this area.[122] Later, after moving to Arizona, he also became a volunteer assistant in the Pima County Sheriff's Department.[123] He continued to preach occasionally at Methodist Churches throughout Missouri. He also kept up his ties with the

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[120] He had been a Mason since he had joined the Salisbury Lodge when he was a circuit rider there. Certificate for Ralph L. Woodward as a Noble of the Mystic Shrine in Ararat Temple, Kansas City, MO, November 30, 1962; Millard D. Hamilton to Ralph L. Woodward, Kansas City, November 15, 1978, with "Certificate of Demit, Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine;" Ralph L. Woodward to Members and Friends of the Fayette Masonic Organizations, Fayette, July 26, 1972, RLWColl., Docs. 4, 5, and 154.

[121] Martha Eikermann, "Catching this Retired College President Takes Some Doing," *Columbia Tribune* (January 26, 1974).

[122] M. J. Veach, Acting Command MARS Director, to Ralph L. Woodward, May 23, 1968, commended him for "the outstanding manner in which you responded in lending assistance during the recent tornadoes in Iowa. The success of your operations is a direct return of the time and effort invested in the many hours of training in net procedures and net discipline conducted in the past." RLWColl., Doc. 177.

[123] Pima County Sheriff's Department certification of 16-hour Citizen Bear Training, Green Valley, Arizona, September 24, 1982, RLWColl., Doc. 178.

Congregationalists in New England and in 1982 the Connecticut Conference of Congregational Christian Churches honored him with a recognition of the value and meaning of his ministry 50 years after his departure.[124] He maintained his active membership as a minister in the Missouri Methodist Conference West, as his following report at age 87 indicates:

> Report of RALPH L. WOODWARD, Missouri Conference West, to the Charge Conference of Paul H. Linn Memorial Church, Fayette, Mo. to be held December 1, 1993.
>
> Several years ago, finding that I could seldom attend the meetings of the Missouri Conference West, I requested to be put under care of the Paul H. Linn Memorial Church even though residence was in and out of Missouri at various times. This request was made primarily because Linn Memorial has been our 'home church' for many years. My relationship started in the old Centenary Church days as a student, and has continued through the years in the basement church, and later in the present wonderful structure that serves as a place of worship for the people of Fayette and the faculty and students of the College. For Beulah, Ralph, and their children it remains 'home base'. We are grateful for what it stands for as well as for what it has meant through the years.
>
> Age and travel facilities limit the range of my ministerial activities at present. We are in regular attendance at the 4th Sabbath day services of the Sanlando United Methodist Church here in Longwood. This church is less than twenty five years old and has a membership of about 1800. It is truly a family church with a wide range of activities from daily kindergarten to hand holding for us 'old folk'. It is truly a great church, but still lacks the personal contact we enjoy at Linn Memorial.
>
> My other ministerial activity this year has been to help plan and initiate a program of vesper services held on Sunday afternoons here at Chambrel, primarily for those of our number who can no longer travel to regular services. I try not to preside except in emergencies but encourage clergy of area to become acquainted with the people.
>
> This year I serve as president of the resident association of Chambrel, but can hardly call it a ministry even though it is a form of needed service.
>
> Beulah and I at ages 87 and 85 keep thinking that we should move back to Fayette and enjoy our last days among old friends. Who knows, we may still get that done but do plan to be at Linn Memorial for some services before the next summer is complete. Best wishes to all.[125]

Immediately following his retirement, he and Beulah took a long trip around the

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[124]Rev. Caroll E. Kann to Ralph L. Woodward, June 21, 1982, RLWColl., Doc. 99.

[125]Report of Ralph L. Woodward, Missouri Conference West, to the Charge Conference of

world and thereafter they frequently traveled abroad or to the various locales of their three children. Both Ralph and Beulah stayed busy with volunteer work, first in Fayette, then in Arizona, and finally in Florida. In the mid 1970s they had begun to spend half the year at a retirement village, Green Valley, south of Tucson, but later shifted their winter abode to a retirement home near Orlando, Florida, where they were close to their daughter, Margaret and her husband, John Drakesmith. This also put them closer to their other children, Lee in New Orleans, and Nancy in Fort Meyers Beach, Florida. They still returned to Fayette frequently and near the end of their lives began to consider seriously returning there to live. He was an educator until that moment and he never stopped learning, or teaching, or serving humanity. At Chambrell, the retirement community in Florida where he spent his last years, many of the residents found him an inspiration and a role model. He served as the President of their Resident Association in the mid-1990s.[126] He became reasonably computer literate with the help of his children and carried on substantial correspondence via e-mail with children and grandchildren.

Ralph Woodward left this world at 2 a.m. on July 19, 1996, after suffering an aneurism the day before. He had been taken to the hospital, but the abdominal aneurism may have already ruptured by the time they were able to locate it. After cremation, his ashes were interred at Fayette City Cemetery. A Memorial service was held at Linn Memorial Methodist Church there on August 17, 1996. Professor Tom Yancey and I presented brief eulogies. Yancey recalled the turbulent days of the 1960s on the campus – "the Vietnam years. *Our* students, as well as students in Berkeley, California, were protesting all over the place. I vividly remember having to walk through a sea of bodies all lying spread out on the first floor

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Paul H. Linn Memorial Church, Fayette, MO, to be held December 1, 1993, RLWColl., Doc. 287.

[126] Ralph L. Woodward to Chambrell at Island Lake residents, c. March 1994,

of Brannock Hall while we tried to get to our mailboxes. Any administrator exercising authority across the country deserved a badge of courage for surviving that violent period, including Ralph Woodward." Yancey continued to reminisce: "During those years between 1950 and 1970, the weekly chapel services here on every Tuesday at 10:00 A.M. sharp were mandatory, and I shall always remember the prayer that Ralph Woodward gave at the close of those services. With both hands raised– 'And now may the love of God, the communion and fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be in every one of your hearts, now and forever more. Amen.' I think that was why we students benevolently called him the 'Great White Father.' These walls still reverberate with that same prayer along with many other past memories in this glorious Gothic sanctuary."[127]

R.L.Woodward Collection.

[127]"In Memoriam: Ralph Lee Woodward, President of Central Methodist College, 1950-1970," *The Talon: The Magazine of Central Methodist College* (Fall 1996): 12-13.